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Australian and New Zealand Standard Offence Classification (ANZSOC)

Reference period: 2023

Released 30/11/2023

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ANZSOC hierarchy and codes

The ANZSOC is a hierarchical classification with three levels: Divisions (the broadest level), Subdivisions (the intermediate level) and Groups (the finest level).

At the division level, the main purpose is to provide a limited number of categories that present a broad overall picture of offence types. The subdivision and group levels provide increasingly detailed dissections of these categories for the compilation of more specific and detailed statistics.

There are seventeen divisions, numbered 01 to 17. Each group is represented by a four-digit code, where the first two digits refer to the division, the third digit refers to the subdivision, and the fourth digit is the group itself. For example:

Example hierarchy levels

Division 09	Drug offences
Subdivision 091	International drug trafficking
Group 0911	Illegal import of drugs

Subdivisions and groups ending with “9” are for offences not elsewhere classified (“nec”) within the subdivision or division. For example:

Example nec hierarchy

Division 03	Sexual offences
Subdivision 039	Other sexual offences
Group 0399	Sexual offences, nec

Where a subdivision is not further disaggregated, the scope and name of the subdivision and group are identical. These groups end with “0”. For example:

Example hierarchy for identical group and subdivision

Division 01	Homicide
Subdivision 011	Murder
Group 0110	Murder

Supplementary codes

When using the ANZSOC to code data, offences should be coded to the group level whenever possible. However, there may be instances in which there is insufficient information to code to a four-digit group level. In such situations, a four-digit code should be used by adding a zero to the subdivision to specify the offence is not further defined (“nfd”).

In any instances where a subdivision cannot be selected, the most suitable division is selected, and two zeros are appended to its code to make a four-digit code. For example:

Example nfd hierarchy

Division 1000	Weapons and explosives offences, not further defined
Subdivision 1030	Manufacture weapons or explosives, not further defined

If there is insufficient data to assign an offence to any ANZSOC division, then the ‘unknown’ code 9999 can be used.

The unknown code is distinct from offences where there is sufficient data provided to conclude that the offence is outside the scope of any of the specified divisions, subdivisions, or groups. In this context, the offence should be coded to 1799 Miscellaneous offences, not elsewhere classified.

Conceptual basis of the classification

Scope of the classification

For the purposes of the ANZSOC, an offence is defined as: any criminal act or omission by a person, persons, organisation, or organisations for which a penalty could be imposed by the Australian legal system or the New Zealand legal system.

The definitions of categories have been carefully chosen to minimise confusion as to the boundaries of each category. As a result the content of each category is expected to be largely uniform across jurisdictions, despite differences in legislation. Where known variations in the scope of legislation preclude consistency, this has been specified in the group description.

Classification criteria

At the broadest level, the classification makes distinctions based on the most fundamental elements of legal and behavioural criteria. These include the following:

- **Violence:** Whether violence is involved, and the nature of the violence. For example, theft is separated from robbery because the latter involves violence, and the former does not. Violence may include physical, sexual, emotional, or other forms of violence. It also includes threats of violence and conspiracy to commit violent acts.
- **Acquisition:** Whether the intent of the offence is acquisitive. Acquisition usually refers to gaining something, but it can also refer to an avoidance of a loss. It may involve something tangible, such as property or money, or something intangible, such as impact on reputation, receipt of information, or access to a physical or online space.
- **Victim:** The nature and vulnerability of the victim or object offended against. Types of victims include persons, organisations, property, and the community. The level of vulnerability of the victim, or level of legislative protection provided to the victim, is also relevant for offences such as assault and sexual assault.
- **Ancillary offences:** Whether the offence only exists as an extension of, or in relation to, another offence. Such offences include attempts, threats, and conspiracies to commit another offence, or offences involving the intent that another offence shall take place.
- **Intent:** Whether the offence occurs as a result of a negligent or reckless act, or as a result of an intent to commit an offence. For example, this criterion distinguishes manslaughter from murder.
- **Seriousness:** While offence seriousness was considered, it is important to note that divisions of the classification are not ranked by seriousness. The [National Offence Index \(NOI\)](https://statistics.classifications.australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023/national-offence-index-noi) ([/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023/national-offence-index-noi](https://statistics.classifications.australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023/national-offence-index-noi)) is a separate statistical tool that ranks the ANZSOC groups in order of perceived seriousness.

Application of the criteria

In applying the classification criteria the following approach has been adopted. In most instances:

- violent offences are in different divisions to non-violent offences,

- acquisitive offences are in different divisions to non-acquisitive offences, and
- the victim type is consistent across a division.

However, there are some instances where one of these principles is elevated over another. For example, Division 12 includes a small number of violent offences (such as riot or affray) alongside non-violent offences. However, these offences are included in the same division because they relate to community health, safety, and wellbeing. They are different from violent offences in Divisions 01 to 06 where there is usually a specified victim.

Except where otherwise specified, attempts, threats, intentions, and conspiracies are generally classified alongside the actual offence. For example, conspiracy to steal is classified alongside actual theft offences in Division 07.

Concordances

The concordances show the relationship between the ANZSOC 2011 and ANZSOC 2023 editions of the classification. These concordances are provided in [Downloads \(/statistics/classifications/australian-and-new-zealand-standard-offence-classification-anzsoc/2023#downloads\)](#).

Further information

For more information about this classification contact the National Centre for Crime and Justice Statistics.

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